Secondly, the Committees should be given greater powers in regard to finance. Under the existing arrangements, the Committees have the power of transferring funds from one sub-head to another under each major head. But that was not sufficient. Power should be given to the Committee to transfer funds from one major head to another.

Thirdly, the Committees should have power to frame rules on emergent occasions, as, for instance, when an epidemic broke out. They had now to invoke the aid of the Epidemic Diseases Regulation and address Government on the subject. That took a lot of time. The best arrangement would be to empower the Committees to frame rules with the help of the local Medical officer to meet an emergency.

Fourthly, the right of moving resolutions in the Committees should be given to the Members.

Dewan.—Is such a power exercised by the Municipalities in British India?

Member.—I am not aware.

Dewan.—They have, I believe, only the right of interpellation.

Member.—The right of moving resolutions in respect of matters appertaining to Municipal administration must be given to the Members.

The Member concluded by saying that, as the Municipal Conference was soon to meet, he would place other matters of detail for consideration at the Conference.

Dewan's reply.—With reference to the first point urged by the Member, I may say that the Government are for giving as much power as possible to the Committees, provided the practical working of these institutions is not thereby rendered impossible or difficult. That, of course, depends upon the state of feeling which exists between the President and the Members of the Committees. Very often the relation between the President and the Members is quite cordial and then there would be no difficulty. Sometimes, unfortunately, the relationship is not as cordial as it should be. Then it is that difficulties begin to be felt.

The other points also will be considered carefully.

33. Desirability of amending Section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation.

Mr. K. Narayana Pillai (Member, Ambalapuzha Taluk) said that, for the advantageous cultivation of the *punja* lands in Kuttanad, it was essential that the ring bunds of groups of lands taken together should be completed by the month of Kanni or at least before the Thulam floods. The failure of some of the cultivators to contribute cost or labour for the work of erecting such ring bunds would be known only in the month of Vrischikam. That was the time when the aggrieved proprietors of lands would resort to the benefit of section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072. At that time the cultivators could not afford to leave their lands, as, if they did, cultivation would suffer. Section 23 gave power to take action, after enquiry, to the Division Peishkar. But, to meet the emergency of the occasion, it was necessary that the local Tahsildar should have the power. In the interests of the *punja* cultivators of Kuttanad, the Member prayed that section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation be amended so as to invest Tahsildars with the powers now exercised by Division Peishkars under that section.

Dewan's reply.—Under Regulation VI of 1090, the Government can empower *any* officer to take action under section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation. The opinions of the Peishkars as to the classes of officers who may be thus empowered will be invited and, on receipt of their reports, necessary action will be taken.

(2) CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

34. Suggestions for the better administration of Criminal Justice in the Shertalay taluk.

Mr. R. Sankaranarayana Menon (Member, Shertalay Taluk) first dwelt upon the importance of the taluk and the long-standing grievance of the people

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because of the absence of a First Class Magistrate's Court. On account of the large number of criminal offences triable by a First Class Magistrate, they should have either a First Class Magistrate's Court or the Tahsildar of the taluk should be invested with the powers of a First Class Magistrate. Though their prayer was granted as a result of the representation at the 13th session of the Assembly, they were again put back to their original condition when the Tahsildar, who had the powers of a First Class Magistrate, was transferred from their taluk.

The Member then complained that the Court of the Stationary Magistrate was housed in a most unsuitable building and requested that the Court be shifted to Shertalay or accommodated in a decent building.

Dewan.—The District Magistrate will be asked to report on this matter.

The Member's next request was that a Police sub-station be opened at Mararikulam where grave offences took place often and there was no security of person or property.

He then requested that the Police sub-station, which was in existence at Thanneermukkam and was abolished during the time of Mr. George, the late Police Commissioner, be re-established. The head-quarters of the Arukutty Circle Inspector of Police should also be transferred to Shertalay or, if that was not possible, a capable Police officer should be posted to Shertalay.

Dewan's reply.—The question of posting a Tahsildar with First Class Magisterial powers at Shertalay will be considered. The head-quarters of the Circle Inspector of Police cannot be shifted from Arukutty, as it is an important Excise station where much revenue is collected. That place must have a Circle Inspector. As for posting a competent Police officer at Shertalay, the Commissioner of Police will attend to it. The representations of the Member about the need for sub-stations at Mararikulam and Thanneermukkam will be referred to the Commissioner of Police for report.

35. Need for a First Class Magistrate's Court at Attungal.

Mr. J. Kamalam (Member, T. I. C., Attungal) said that, before the year 1089, a court presided over by an officer having the powers of a First Class Magistrate and exercising jurisdiction over the whole taluk was in existence at Attungal. From 1090 M. E., the Government extended the jurisdiction of the court at Varkala over all the *pakuthies* of the Chirayinkil taluk except the three small *pakuthies* of Attungal, Edakkode and Koonthalloor; and in consequence, the Magistrate at Attungal was deprived of his First Class powers. Such a state of affairs caused inconvenience and trouble to the people as they were thus forced to go long distances. Further, the present arrangement caused loss of money both to the people and the Government. The Member, therefore, prayed that a First Class Magistrate's Court be established at Attungal, with jurisdiction over the whole taluk.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

(3) Civil Justice.

36. Need for passing definite rules for fixing the value of improvements.

Mr. M. Kochukrishna Pillai (Member, Neyyattinkara Taluk) complained about the absence of specific rules for assessing the value of improvements concerning which disputes often arose between parties in civil courts and sometimes between the parties and the Government. A few decisions of the High Court contained some instructions, but the decisions were based exclusively on the evidence or admission of parties in particular cases and had no reference to the customs of the different localities or to the methods of valuing non-bearing cocoanut or other kinds of trees. He mentioned the following as some of the points in regard to which definite rules were necessary :—

(1) What are the kinds of improvements on which value can be claimed ?

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